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ABSTRACT

The Humanities Enrichment Program (HEP) and The Master Teacher Program (MT) were sponsored by the National Humanities Faculty to improve and encourage humanities instruction. The 40 schools in the program participated in curriculum development workshops, demonstration lessons, and public information meetings. A consultant also contacted local school administrators in an effort to improve humanities advocacy. Evaluation of this program revealed a positive effect on the personal and professional growth of participating teachers, although its impact on the humanities curriculum or on the effectiveness of humanities instruction is uncertain. The MT program was similar to HEP but placed responsibility on a master teacher who directed the work of a task force of local teachers in each of 50 schools in developing a humanities curriculum. Evaluation of this program revealed an even more positive effect on participating teachers, but fewer teachers were influenced. Master Teachers were only marginally effective at stimulating colleagues and local program changes or curriculum development. Data sources of both evaluations were questionnaires, interviews, observations, case studies, and project documents. Evaluators concluded with the proposal that if touching the lives and actions of a few teachers is well worth doing, these projects had impact. (Author/JM)

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EVALUATION STUDIES OF TWO PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION IN THE HUMANITIES

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EVALUATION STUDIES FOR TWO PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION IN THE HUMANITIES

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For the past two decades, educational improvement has been a matter of active concern at the national level. Considerable financial support has been directed toward mathematics, science, reading, vocational education, and instruction of students with learning handicaps. Relatively little support has been available for improving instruction in the humanities. Yet the prospects for liberal education, for many compelling reasons, are not especially encouraging (Hurn, 1979; Ong, 1969). Thus, any notable efforts to improve instruction in the humanities are a matter of more than passing interest.

The National Humanities Faculty (NHF), largely with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, has been one of the few nationally recognized groups systematically addressing this issue. During the last five years NHF completed two major programs intended to improve humanities instruction at the pre-collegiate level.

This report describes the evaluation studies that sought to determine the consequences of "The Humanities Enrichment Program" (HEP) and "The Master Teacher Program" (MT).

The National Humanities Faculty

The NHF is comprised of a central office staff of three full-time professionals plus a half dozen other workers. The "faculty" consists of scholars in various humanities disciplines. These faculty members serve on a consultant basis,

by NHF arrangement, typically two or three days at a time, in situations calling for the talents of the individual consultant.

Program Objectives

Each program had generally similar objectives. These are best summarized in a NHF document of November 1978: "The goals of NHF are that students should be exposed to the humanities, to their breadth and purpose, and to their joy, in the presence of teachers who know and love what they teach; that they should learn how to inquire reasonably, communicate clearly, and respond to the arts of humanity appreciatively; and that they should achieve sufficient grasp of subject content to reach out for more on their own if they wish."

Within this frame of reference NHF identified several program objectives. These emphasized the intent of NHF to help participating schools evaluate existing humanities programs and develop improved humanities courses. NHF would respond to the concerns and needs identified by the participating schools, offering suggestions regarding course content, teaching methodology, use of instructional resources, and, sometimes, presenting seminars in the humanities for teachers and the public. Two general considerations remained paramount. First, NHF had no preconceived or "packaged" humanities curriculum it sought to export to the schools; the intent was to stimulate and support local efforts to design and implement a humanities curriculum most appropriate for that setting. Second, NHF did not limit its attention to matters of pedagogy; much emphasis was placed on motivating and instructing teachers with respect to the content of the humanities.

Selection of Participating Schools

Any secondary school in the United States was eligible to apply for selection into the HEP or MT program. Selection procedures included an evaluation of the

written proposal and a site visit by one NHF staff member to estimate the need, the capability, and the commitment of the applicant. However, this procedure was not intended to eliminate all weak applicants. Final selections included several schools with very great need, but with significant problems that reduced the likelihood of fully successful projects.

In short, the projects were intended not only to help the best become better; a few high risk schools were deliberately included.

Evaluation Methodology

Several considerations limited prospects for a rigorous evaluation design.

(1) Objectives.

Individual schools, seeking to respond to unique local needs, emphasized differing objectives. Thus, it was difficult to assess the degree of accomplishment of objectives in a standard manner for all schools. Further, every project was dynamic in nature, changing constantly in response to changing local circumstances.

(2) Sampling.

Given the large number of participating schools (87 schools), site visits and case studies for each were impossible. In consultation with NHF, 18 schools were selected for site visits and for detailed case study analysis. Choices were based on NHF estimates of the extent to which any given school had been successful; the evaluation sample included a representative proportion of successful, intermediate, and unsuccessful projects. As might be expected, factors that led to less successful local projects also led to less cooperation in subsequent evaluative activities.

(3) Significance of Results.

It was not possible to "measure" results or to compare these against a predetermined standard of accomplishment. Judgments of significance of results depended upon attempts to understand just what the participants hoped to accomplish and then to compare these with all pertinent indicators.

(4) Methodology.

The foregoing factors, and others, combined to dictate the choice of a "soft" evaluation methodology. Data sources included questionnaires, interviews, observations, case studies, and all project documents. Experimental or quasi-experimental techniques were not applicable (Anderson and Ball, 1978).

The Humanities Enrichment Program (1975-1977)

(1) Program Characteristics.

HEP was conducted in two cycles, one for each year. Twenty-five schools participated in 1975-76 and another fifteen the following year.

Participating schools identified particular needs, named a local coordinator, and a humanities "core faculty." NHF provided a "faculty advisor" from its membership. Subsequently, the NHF staff, the local coordinator, and the NHF advisor planned a series of consultant visits. Approximately ten to twelve days of consultant time were provided to each school. Specific activities for the NHF visitors were arranged in consultation with the NHF and the local coordinator. Activities included curriculum development workshops with the core faculty, demonstration lessons, meetings with large groups of teachers and the general public, and "advocacy" discussions with local school administrators.

(2) Program Effects.

The effects of HEP can be grouped into four broad categories.

(a) Staff Development

For both years of HEP, the most obvious impact was on the individual teachers. Teachers consistently reported that HEP stimulated their interest in the humanities, increased knowledge in the humanities, and motivated them to reexamine and expand the role of the humanities in their own lives as well as in their teaching.

Quotes from two teachers in different schools capture the essence of this outcome:

"Overall, it was the exultation and celebration of the ascendancy of spirit over the pressures of fading morale and diminishing finances . . . . . there are never-ceasing, ever-widening ripples still emanating from these (NHF) visits."

"I watched my friends and me grow because of our interactions. Rigorous but rewarding intellectual discussions drained and revitalized me. I saw cynicism erode. I spoke to and thought about people differently. I am infected in a joyous way."

Responses to questionnaire items corroborated the personal testimony offered during on-site interviews and in numerous reports submitted by participating teachers.

(b) Curriculum Development

Much HEP activity was directed at improving instruction in the humanities. Both NHF visitors and local core faculty viewed this as a controlling purpose of the project. Both worked diligently to make progress in that direction, and all reports abound with descriptions of curriculum development efforts.

Actual accomplishments, however, varied substantially. For the first cycle of HEP, course outlines, lesson plans, or similar materials that would define new or revised courses rarely were completed, though sometimes work on these was in progress.

During the second cycle of HEP, greater emphasis was placed on developing finished curriculum materials, and nearly one-half of the participating schools produced tangible products. Frequently, however, these curriculum documents were in preliminary form, were schematic rather than complete, and often had meaning just for those who developed them.

Questionnaire responses and interview data supported this picture. Fewer than fifty percent of the teachers reported that curriculum development objectives had been "accomplished to a very great extent."

On the other hand, during on-site interviews, most teachers described their humanities courses in considerable detail - the content, the methods, the materials, the response of the students, the hopes and plans for next year. Core faculty teachers had a sense of direction as a result of HEP even though conventional curriculum documentation was still under development.

(c) Instructional Methodology

Outcomes related to improved teaching methodology and the development of instructional aids were less evident. About one-third of the responses rated accomplishment high with respect to introduction of new teaching methods, better use of community resources, better evaluation techniques, better use of instructional media, and similar methodological concerns.

(d) Advocacy

A needs assessment study incorporated into this study showed that the core faculty placed high priority on the need for public and administrative support of the humanities. NHF visitors directed considerable energy at this concern.

Questionnaire responses indicated that these efforts were fairly successful when aimed at school administrators, but were less effective with school board members and the general public. Results most often took the form of non-material support - better scheduling of teachers to allow multidisciplinary planning, more efficient procedures for field trips, publicity and recognition, things of this nature. Material support depending upon budget adjustments takes more time, and almost never was this accomplished within the period of the HEP project.

(e) Summary - HEP

It is evident that the greatest benefit attributed to HEP was the positive effect on the personal and professional growth of the participating teachers. This is an intangible outcome, and it is difficult to trace exactly what impact it had on the nature of the humanities curriculum or the effectiveness of humanities instruction. It seems reasonable, however, to hypothesize that such a positive impact on teachers would lead to better humanities instruction.

Before discussing the implications of these findings, let us next examine the results of the Master Teacher Program.

The Master Teacher Program (1977-1978)

(1) Program Characteristics

The MT program was a variant of HEP, but sought to respond to some of the limitations of HEP by focussing responsibility more explicitly. "Master Teachers," one at each of the fifty participating schools, were the local leaders in place of the "local coordinators" of the HEP effort. More intensive training was given these "Master Teachers." They were assigned specific responsibility for directing the work of a "task force" of local humanities teachers, which was expected to develop specific humanities curriculum materials during the year.

Similarly, a new role was defined for NHF advisors, requiring more extensive interactions between advisors and Master Teachers.

This involvement began with NHF planned "team building" activities during the Spring of 1977. An intensive Summer institute followed. Master Teachers, advisors, and other NHF personnel studied and worked together for four weeks at a California college campus. Instruction in selected themes from the humanities was provided; teachers exchanged ideas and experiences; and teachers completed several demanding assignments, both academic and practical. Each Master Teacher prepared a six-week humanities unit for later use, and to function as the entry point for continued local curriculum development with the task force teachers during the subsequent year.

Throughout that ensuing year the NHF advisor remained in continued contact by telephone, correspondence, and occasionally by site visits. Each school was eligible for approximately four days of NHF consultant visits, arranged according to the needs and activities of the particular

school. Of the forty-seven schools completing the MT project affiliation, seven had no follow-up visit at all. Although explanations vary from case to case, each was in one sense a "failure" of the MT program at the site.

(2) Program Effects

(a) Staff Development

Although the Master Teachers had extensive opportunities to work with NHF personnel, especially during the Summer institute, this was not true of local Task Force members. Each of the thirty-seven Master Teachers submitting a Final Project Report, reported highly significant personal growth. Many considered the NHF relationship among the most important of their careers. But among the Task Force members the impact varied; a substantial sense of growth, motivation, or ownership was evident at about one-third of the sites visited during the evaluation study.

(b) Curriculum Development

The Master Teachers prepared a six-week unit of instruction in the humanities as part of their work during the Summer institute. NHF tutors aided in the preparation of these, and provided detailed written critiques. Approximately three-quarters of these critiques described the units as excellent in terms of content and teachability. Another fifteen to twenty percent described the units as promising, but needing improvement. Perhaps about ten percent of the units were judged inadequate for effective use in teaching the humanities, and still in need of much additional work.

Five of seven units reviewed by this evaluator were judged excellent; one held modest promise; one was inadequate.

Curriculum development activities continued at each school through the 1977-1978 school year. In the Fall of 1978, thirty of the forty-seven Master Teachers submitted reports describing the extent of local curriculum development:

	N	%
Existing courses revised as result of MT Program	24	80%
New course created as result of MT Program	10	33%
Plans for future revision of existing courses	16	53%
Plans for developing new course	11	37%
Summer institute curriculum unit contributed to course revision	21	70%
Summer institute curriculum unit contributed to development of new course	12	40%

Thus, it is evident that the MT program generated more curriculum development activity than did its HEP predecessors.

(c) Instructional Methodology

Obviously, it is questionable whether curriculum and method can be separated. Yet there is some indication that the MT program had greater impact on the selection and organization of content and less impact on teaching methods.

For example, impact on academic content received a "very effective" rating seventy percent of the time whereas impact on teaching methods received a similar rating just fourteen percent of the time.

During on-site interviews, teachers often suggested that the NHF members had expertise in selection and organization of content, but the Master Teachers themselves were the experts in teaching methodology appropriate for high school students. Such comments are consistent with the ratings just reported.

The important exception involved those instances where NHF members were themselves associated with a specific curriculum project such as the Bay Area Writing Project.

(d) Strategy and Advocacy

Unlike HEP, the MT program directed massive support at one local teacher, the Master Teacher, and provided few direct contacts with other Task Force members or local educational leaders. Hence, NHF members had little opportunity to advocate the humanities, except through the Master Teacher. Although there certainly was some advocacy, coping with local problems of implementation was not a major concern of the MT program.

For example, impact on "strategies for subsequent work with local Task Force" received a "very effective" rating at seven percent of the sites, and was rated as having "no effect" at fifty percent of the sites.

Consequently, the MT project had a greater impact on the Master Teachers, and on the courses they taught, than on programs or institutions. This conclusion is supported by the data in the thirty-seven Final Project Reports submitted by the Master Teachers. Highest average ratings were given to the program for its impact on 1) "you as an advocate of the humanities," 2) "you as a teacher," 3) "you as a learner." In contrast, lowest

ratings were given items dealing with impact on 1) "program requirements," 2) "coordinated teaching," and 3) "coordination of courses." Note that the latter group requires consent and action by others; such changes cannot be implemented by just one teacher, whereas the former group deals with the effect on only one person, the Master Teacher.

(e) Summary - MT

Once again, it is evident that impact on persons was greater than observable impact on program, as was true for HEP. However, in HEP, with its more frequent contacts with the local "core faculty," more teachers were influenced. On the other hand, the Master Teachers were personally influenced to a greater degree, but were only marginally effective in stimulating colleagues and local program changes or curriculum development. Seemingly, the MT program had greater impact than HEP, but influenced a smaller number of teachers in any given school.

Analysis

(1) Change Typology

These NHF projects were attempts to change educational practices with respect to the humanities. The change strategy combined a responsive element and a proactive element. With respect to academic content NHF clearly assumed a proactive stance. With respect to curriculum needs and teaching methods, the NHF responded to the needs capabilities, and hopes of the local school system. Goals were set mutually and deliberately; NHF had no "power over" the local school personnel. Thus, within the Bennis typology of change processes

(Bennis, 1961), we have an example of "planned change," which, in the literature of change strategy appears to be the preferred approach.

(2) Change Model

The change model adopted by NHF corresponds to the "user-driven system" advocated by Mann (1978). As such, it faced a predictable paradox. Any user-driven system depends on the sustained commitment of the users to make a significant effort to change. But those with the greatest commitment to change are the ones least in need of external support to do so.

Case study analyses made it evident that, in the absence of local commitment to change, the NHF approach had almost no impact. And the initial decision to include "high risk" schools in both HEP and MT heightened the likelihood that this sometimes would be the result. Conversely, where the commitment to change was valued, where teacher effort and administrative leadership were combined with appropriate resources, major progress in developing a strong humanities program was realized.

All of this suggests that a choice of a user-driven change model was not fully compatible with a selection process that encouraged acceptance of several "high risk" applicants.

(3) Local Adaptation

The crucial significance of the variations among local settings and local personnel was evident. NHF sought to respond to idiosyncratic local needs while preserving the integrity of the humanities disciplines. By helping each participating school deal with its own perceived problems, and by avoiding the temptation to create a "humanities curriculum" for general adoption, NHF avoided many of the

problems of adoption and implementation facing those who attempt to introduce fully-structured innovations (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975).

(4) Critical Mass

There is an opposite side to this coin, however. A participant-developed innovation faces a variety of "critical mass" requirements. It is essential that there be a nucleus of local personnel large enough to do the necessary work and to mobilize the support necessary for acceptance of the innovation within the system. Further, it is essential that there be extensive contact with outside consultants who provide the intellectual leadership and specialized knowledge needed for the innovative effort. Finally, the magnitude of local resources - time, money, materials - must be compatible with the needs of the innovative activity.

Neither HEP nor the MT program dealt completely with these critical mass problems. HEP involved a large enough group, but not in enough depth. The MT program involved the Master Teachers very extensively, but usually they could not generate enough involvement by the local Task Force to have significant program impact. There were other critical mass limitations beyond the control of NHF such as reduced local resources, lack of released time for Task Force members, and the like.

(5) Milieu of the School

Goodlad (1979) emphasized the need to view the school as the unit of change, to see it as capable of autonomy and initiative, with its own culture and set in its own milieu. NHF carried out its programs with this general orientation in mind. This was appropriate, but by itself not completely adequate. Unless all major forces impinging on the humanities program - the teachers, the administration, the parents,

the school board, the tax-paying public - accept this same general orientation, the effects of single-source intervention will usually be limited to touching the lives and actions of a few teachers. Significant impact on a whole school or on a major program is unlikely. And so it was for these two NHF programs.

Of course, one must always consider the possibility that touching the lives and actions of a few teachers is well worth doing. In that more modest context, these NHF projects indeed had impact.

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